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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUDAPE 02894 251316Z

45
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 VO-03 INSE-00 SCA-01 /017 W
---------- 116913
R 250720Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6753

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FOR EUR/EE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, CVIS, HU
SUBJ: DIVIDED FAMILIES

REF: BUDAPEST 2631, BUDAPEST 2687, BUDAPEST 2492

1. DURING A DETAILED, TWO-HOUR TETE-A-TETE ON DIVIDED FAMILIES AUGUST 23 WITH MFA CONSULAR DEPARTMENT ACTING HEAD EGYED, CONSULAR SECTION CHIEF PRESENTED A NEW INFORMAL REPRESENTATION LIST OF SEVEN DIVIDED FAMILY CASES INVOLVING 14 INDIVIDUALS IN HUNGARY. FOUR CASES WERE STILL PENDING FROM OUR PREVIOUS TWO LISTS, THREE ARE NEW. TWO OF THE NEW CASES WERE ADDED AFTER BUDAPEST 2687 WAS SENT. MEMCON AND COPY OF LIST BEING POUCHED TO GERTH, EUR/EE.

2. CASES SPECIFICALLY SUPPORTED DURING PRESENTATION AND ALREADY KNOWN TO GERTH WERE SZABO, SOMOGYI, MIHALIK, FARO, AND BUCSANYI.

3. WHILE CONSUL PITCHED PRESENTATION IN LOW KEY AND IN A USG-GOH "MUTUALLY HELPFUL" FRAMEWORK, HE STRESSED ACUTE CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN MIHALIK CASE (BUDAPEST 2631) AND POSSIBLY SIMILAR INTEREST IN FARO (BUDAPEST 2492). EGYED LISTENED ATTENTIVELY TO ENTIRE PRESENTATION AND APPEARED IMPRESSED BY THE DETAIL WITH WHICH IT WAS OBVIOUS CONSUL HAD RESEARCHED ALL CASES. IN ADDITION TO HIS STANDARD REPLY THAT MFA WOULD REFER OUR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 BUDAPE 02894 251316Z

INTEREST TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES, EGYED STATED

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

APPRECIATION OF USG WILLINGNESS TO KEEP DIVIDED FAMILY MATTERS IN THE QUIET CONSULAR CHANNEL, AND EXPRESSED CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM THAT SUCH AN APPROACH, COUPLED WITH PERSISTENCE IN PASSPORT RE-APPLICATIONS BY PROSPECTIVE EMIGRANTS, WOULD PROVE FRUITFUL. EGYED NOTED THAT A MORE OPEN OR PUBLIC POLITICAL APPROACH TO DIVIDED FAMILIES WOULD LIKELY BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.

4. EGYED ALSO VOLUNTEERED THAT IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL FOR U.S. DIVIDED FAMILY SPONSORS TO BRING THEIR REQUESTS FOR FAMILY REUNIFICATION TO THE ATTENTION OF THE HUNGARIAN EMBASSY THERE. HE IMPLIED THAT SUCH WOULD BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL IN CASES WHERE SPONSORS ARE NOT U.S. CITIZENS, AND THEORETICALLY NOT LEGALLY ENTITLED TO U.S. CONSULAR REPRESENTATION, THE INFERENCE BEING THAT THE "COMPETENT AUTHORITIES" HERE LOOK ASKANCE AT HUNGARIAN CITIZENS IN U.S. WHO "PUSH" THEIR HUNGARIAN-LAW DIVIDED FAMILY PROBLEMS THROUGH THE USG INSTEAD OF GOH.
EGYED SAID THAT HUNGEMB WOULD REPORT SUCH CONTACTS TO MFA CONSULAR DEPARTMENT, WHICH WOULD FIND SUCH REPORTS "USEFUL" IN ITS REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL CASES WITH THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES.

5. COMMENT. EMBASSY'S CLEAR IMPRESSION IS THAT EGYED AND THE CONSULAR DEPARTMENT, IN RETURN FOR THIS EMBASSY'S REPEATEDLY-DEMONSTRATED WILLINGNESS TO CAREFULLY NOURISH AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY FAVORABLE U.S.-HUNGARIAN CONSULAR RELATIONS, ARE INCLINED TO BE GENUINELY HELPFUL IN DIVIDED FAMILY MATTERS PROVIDED RPT PROVIDED THAT USG CONTINUES TO PRESENT SUCH CASES QUIETLY. BUT REINFORCED IS THE IMPRESSION THAT MFA HAS ITS OWN PROBLEMS IN PERSUADING PASSPORT-ISSUING OFFICES (READ: INTERIOR MINISTRY) TO SEE THE LIGHT, ESPECIALLY WHEN LATTER OFFICIALS PERCEIVE THAT THE USG IS APPLYING "PRESSURE". BASED ON THIS AND PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH EGYED, IT APPEARS QUITE CLEAR THAT INTMIN OFFICIALS REACT PARTICULARLY NEGATIVELY TO PERCEPTIONS OF USG INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF HUNGARIAN-CITIZEN (U.S. PERMANENT RESIDENT) DIVIDED FAMILY SPONSORS, WHO AS NON-U.S. CITIZENS ARE JURIDICALLY NOT ENTITLED TO USG REPRESEN-TATIONS. EMBASSY HAS REPEATEDLY EXPLAINED TO MFA U.S. POLITICAL REALITIES WHICH REQUIRE US TO ASSIGN PRIORITY TO ISSUE OF HUMANI-TARIAN FAMILY REUNIFICATION, AND MFA UNDERSTANDS THIS. RECALCI-

TRANCE, WE ARE CONVINCED, LODGES NOT IN MFA.

6. EMBASSY CONCLUDES THAT OUR PRESENT TACTICS OF QUIET AND PERSISTENT CONSULAR REPRESENTATIONS ON DIVIDED FAMILY CASES ARE WELL-TUNED TO WHAT IS ACTUALLY ATTAINABLE IN CONTEXT OF REALITIES AND SENSITIVITIES IN HUNGARY. AT THE LEAST WE ARE ASSURED OF A COURTEOUS AND ATTENTIVE HEARING AT THE CONSULAR DEPARTMENT. INTRIGUING, AND PERHAPS

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SIGNIFICANT, IS HUNGARIAN SUGGESTION THAT SPONSORS IN U.S. APPROACH HUNGEMB IN WASHINGTON DIRECTLY ON FAMILY REUNIFICATION MATTERS. DEPT MAY WISH TO IMPLEMENT THIS SUGGESTION SINCE: A) IT WOULD ASSIST MFA IN ITS DEALINGS WITH MOI BY REMOVING OSTENSIBLE EVIDENCE OF USG INTER-VENTION; B) IT WOULD INVOLVE HUNGEMB IN WASHINGTON IN PROVIDING REPLIES DIRECTLY TO SPONSORS, AT SAME TIME GIVING IT STAKE IN FAVORABLE REACTIONS. SINCE REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN FAMILY REUNIFICATION CASES INVARIABLY COME THROUGH DEPARTMENT, WE COULD KEEP TABS ON SUCH CASES BY HAVING DEPARTMENT INFORM EMBASSY SO THAT LATTER COULD FOLLOW-UP IF NEED BE.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO THIS NEW MFA SUGGESTION.
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